The Effect of Measuring Ambulatory Blood Pressure on Nighttime Sleep and Daytime Activity—Implications for Dipping

Rajiv Agarwal and Robert P. Light
Indiana University School of Medicine and Richard L. Roudebush Veterans Administration Medical Center, Indianapolis, Indiana

Background and objectives: Ambulatory blood pressure (BP) monitoring is commonly used to assess the circadian pattern of BP. Circadian BP pattern is influenced by physical activity and sleep cycle. The effect of BP monitoring itself on the level of physical activity and sleep remains unknown. If BP monitoring affects these parameters, then monitoring itself may influence the circadian BP pattern.

Design, setting, participants, & measurements: To assess the effect of ambulatory BP monitoring on sleep duration, sleep efficiency, and daytime activity, we measured physical activity using wrist actigraphy in 103 veterans with chronic kidney disease. After 6 to 7 days of continuous activity monitoring, participants underwent ambulatory BP monitoring with simultaneous actigraphy. The above experiment was repeated after 1 mo.

Results: Among the top tertile of patients (most sleep), when wearing ambulatory BP patients spent less time in bed at night (92 min, \( P < 0.0001 \)), were less asleep during those hours (98 min, \( P < 0.0001 \)), and had reduced sleep efficiency (82% versus 77%, \( P = 0.02 \)). On the day of ambulatory BP monitoring, patients were more sedentary during waking hours (+27 minutes, \( P = 0.002 \)). During ambulatory BP monitoring, waking after sleep onset more than median was associated with greater odds for nondipping (odds ratio 10.5, \( P = 0.008 \)).

Conclusions: Ambulatory BP monitoring is associated with disturbed sleep and reduced physical activity, characteristics that influence dipping. Ambulatory BP monitoring may itself induce nondipping and may thus mitigate the prognostic significance of the dipping phenomenon.

Blood pressure (BP) in healthy people follows a circadian pattern that is influenced by the level of activity during the day and depth of sleep at night (1). Sleeping systolic BP, which should at least be 10% lower than awake systolic BP, is often measured by 24-hour ambulatory BP monitoring. This fall in BP during sleep—dipping—is a determinant of prognosis (2). Nondipping occurs in a variety of conditions and diseases, such as in patients with chronic kidney disease (CKD), sleep apnea, volume overload, nocturia, and those with sympathetic activation (3); nondipping is associated with left ventricular hypertrophy (4) and increased cardiovascular risk (5).

Davies et al. (6) have reported that sensory stimulation as may occur during cuff inflation may cause cortical arousal, disturb sleep, and raise BP—a phenomenon they characterized in the sleep laboratory among six normal volunteers. However, it remains unknown to what extent ambulatory BP recording can impair nighttime sleep and whether it can also affect daytime activity.

The purpose of this study was to assess the effect of ambulatory BP monitoring on sleep duration, sleep efficiency, and daytime activity. We hypothesized that ambulatory BP monitoring will reduce sleep efficiency and reduce daytime activity. Further, we hypothesized that those patients who have the maximal sleep disturbance will have the least dipping at night. If so, it would suggest that ambulatory BP monitoring may induce nondipping per se. These findings would have implications for assessing the independent prognostic value of dipping.

Materials and Methods

Participants

We studied veterans between the ages of 18 and 90 years with CKD defined as an estimated GFR (eGFR) of <60 ml/min/1.73 m², or presence of proteinuria (spot urine/protein ratio of >200 mg/g creatinine), or the presence of structural kidney disease (e.g., adult polycystic kidney disease). We excluded those patients who met any of the following characteristics: morbid obesity (body mass index ≥40 kg/m²), eGFR ≥15 ml/min/1.73 m², hospitalization within the prior 2 mo, seated clinic BP ≥140/90 mmHg, or substantial cardiac arrhythmia (defined as ≥6 beats/min).

Study Protocol

The study protocol was approved by the institutional review boards and the VA Research and Development Committee. Patients were
recruited between June 2007 and May 2009 after written informed consent and studied on two occasions 1 mo apart with ambulatory BP monitoring and simultaneous actigraphy as described below.

**Ambulatory BP Monitoring**

Ambulatory BP monitoring (ABPM) was performed in the nondominant arm for 24 hours using the SpaceLab 90207 monitor (SpaceLabs Medical Inc., Redmond, WA) with cuff inflations every 20 minutes during the day (6:00 a.m. to 10:00 p.m.) and every 30 minutes during the night. Accuracy of ambulatory BP recordings was confirmed against auscultated BP. Hourly averages were calculated and the average of these averages represented the mean systolic and diastolic BP. Patients were asked to record the sleep and wake times during this recording. A sleep-to-wake systolic BP ratio of <0.9 was taken as evidence for dipping.

**Actigraphy**

Concomitant activity monitoring was performed using an actigraph (Activwatch 64, Mini Mitter, Bend, OR), a watch-sized device worn on the dominant wrist for 7 to 8 days that also included the day of ABPM. This procedure was performed at baseline and repeated at 1 mo. The internal clocks of the ABPM and actigraph were synchronized and activity was assessed in 15-second epochs throughout the 24-hour period. Data were exported to a custom-designed relational database.

**Actigraphy-Assisted Sleep Assessment**

The following definitions were used to assess sleep:

- Duration in bed: Minutes of the rest interval reported by the patient on each day recorded in the diary.
- Scored total sleep time: Duration in minutes in which the patient was asleep judged by the actigraphic counts. When a weighted average of the epoch of activity in question and 16 surrounding epochs had a total activity count of <20, the patient was said to be asleep. When total activity counts exceeded ≥20, the patient was said to be awake.
- Total awake time: Duration in minutes in which the patient was labeled as awake during the rest interval. Percent of time awake was calculated as the fraction of total awake time to duration in bed ×100%.
- Wake after sleep onset (WASO): Number of minutes between sleep onset and wake time was scored as wake.
- Sleep efficiency: The percent of scored total sleep time to the duration in bed.

**Activity Classification**

To determine the level of activity, we first calculated the total duration of the waking period during a 24-hour period starting from midnight. The level of activity counts of <80 were computed, and duration of any count <80 was taken as resting (level 0). Duration of activity between 80 and 160 counts/epoch (level 1), 160 to 320 counts/epoch (level 2), and >320 counts/epoch (level 3) were taken as evidence of increasingly vigorous activity. Visual inspection of a wheelchair-bound patient for each day for 2 wk revealed nearly all counts per epoch to be ≤160, suggesting a generally sedentary existence. Similarly, inspection of plots of activity in patients who exercised in a gym frequently showed bursts of activity >320 count/epoch, suggesting more vigorous activity.

**Data Analyses**

Categorical mixed models that account for repeated measurements within subjects to model outcome variables for sleep included duration in bed, scored total sleep time, percent awake time, WASO, and sleep efficiency (7). Specifically, the following model was fitted: \( y_{ijk} = \beta_0 + \mu_i + \mu_j + \beta_3(\text{ABPM visit}) + r_{ijk} \) with maximal likelihood estimates in which \( y_{ijk} \) is the outcome variable for sleep on day \( i \) for subject \( j \) on occasion \( k \) (where \( k \) could be 12 occasions without ambulatory monitoring or 2 occasions with ambulatory monitoring). \( \beta_3 \) is the mean intercept number of \( y \) (e.g., sleep efficiency \%) (fixed intercept), \( \mu_i \) is the random intercept for subject \( j \). \( \mu_j \) is the random intercept for occasion \( k \) in subject \( j \). \( \beta_3 \) represents change in \( y \) (e.g., sleep efficiency) for the ABPM visits, and \( r_{ijk} \) is the residual term.

A similar model was used to assess the levels of activity during the day. In a mixed model, we used the number of minutes of activity as a dependent variable nested within participants and visits with the level of activity, ABPM status, and their interactions as independent factors. Specifically, we fitted the following model: \( y_{ijk} = \beta_0 + \mu_i + \mu_j + \beta_3(\text{activity level 1}) + \beta_4(\text{activity level 2}) + \beta_5(\text{activity level 3}) + \beta_6(\text{ABPM + activity level 0}) + \beta_7(\text{ABPM + activity level 1}) + \beta_8(\text{ABPM + activity level 2}) + \beta_9(\text{ABPM + activity level 3}) + r_{ijk} \), with maximal likelihood estimates in which \( y_{ijk} \) is the number of minutes for a specific level of activity on day \( i \) for subject \( j \) and occasion \( k \); \( \beta_0 \) is the mean intercept number of minutes of activity at the lowest level on non-ABPM days (fixed intercept); \( \mu_i \) is the random intercept for subject \( j \); \( \mu_j \) is the random intercept for occasion \( k \) in subject \( j \); \( \beta_3 \) through \( \beta_9 \) represent change in activity in minutes among non-ABPM days for various levels of activity from \( \beta_0 \) to \( \beta_3 \), respectively; and \( r_{ijk} \) is the residual term.

The severity of sleep disturbance assessed by WASO was then related to odds for nondipping by a random intercept logistic regression model. In this model, WASO was dichotomized at median. The dichotomization at median for WASO was performed separately for (1) when patients were not wearing the ambulatory BP monitor and (2) when they were wearing the monitor. This was done to assess the independent effect of WASO at baseline and that induced by ambulatory monitoring on the odds of dipping.

Statistical analyses were performed using Stata 11 (Stata Corporation, College Station, TX) and nominal level of statistical significance was set at a two-sided \( P \) value of <0.05.

**Results**

Of the 103 patients, 97% were men, 83% were white, and the mean body mass index was 30 ± 4.7 kg/m². Etiology of CKD included hypertensive nephrosclerosis (33%), diabetes mellitus (30%), ischemic nephropathy (14%), polycystic kidney disease (5%), GN (9%), obstructive uropathy (4%), and other causes (6%). Mean hemoglobin was 12.9 ± 1.8 g/dl, serum albumin 4.3 ± 0.4 g/dl, and eGFR 38.8 ± 15.4 ml/min/m². Seated clinic BP was 122/59 mmHg, and the patients took on average 3.2 antihypertensive drugs.

The sleep parameters for days with and without ABPM are shown in Table 1. Patients were divided by tertiles for each of the sleep categories. For example, self-reported, diary-recorded duration of sleep among patients in the lowest tertile was 406 minutes, 489 minutes in the next tertile, and 568 minutes in the highest tertile. When wearing an ambulatory BP monitor, patients who slept the most also spent the least time in bed at night (−92 minutes, \( P < 0.0001 \)). Actigraphically measured sleep time among those in the highest tertile was 453 minutes; these patients had a 98-minute reduction in sleep (\( P < 0.0001 \)). The reduction in sleep time followed a linear trend; lesser perturbations in sleep time were seen among those who slept...
Table 1. Change from baseline (CFB) in sleep parameters upon wearing an ambulatory BP monitor\textsuperscript{a,b}

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sleep Parameters</th>
<th>Tertile 1</th>
<th>Tertile 2</th>
<th>Tertile 3</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Stated duration of sleep (min)</td>
<td>406 (8.7)</td>
<td>489 (8.7)</td>
<td>568 (8.6)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CFB</td>
<td>38 (14.2)</td>
<td>−72 (18.3)</td>
<td>−92 (18.1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(P) for change</td>
<td>0.004</td>
<td>&lt;0.0001</td>
<td>&lt;0.0001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total sleep assessed (min)</td>
<td>289 (7.1)</td>
<td>377 (6.9)</td>
<td>453 (7)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CFB</td>
<td>14 (11.8)</td>
<td>−22 (15.8)</td>
<td>−98 (16.3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(P) for change</td>
<td>0.1</td>
<td>0.1</td>
<td>&lt;0.0001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percent awake (%)</td>
<td>16 (1.1)</td>
<td>20 (1.1)</td>
<td>35 (1.1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CFB</td>
<td>6 (1.4)</td>
<td>1 (1.6)</td>
<td>3 (1.5)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(P) for change</td>
<td>&lt;0.0001</td>
<td>0.3</td>
<td>0.04</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wake after sleep onset (min)</td>
<td>41 (4.2)</td>
<td>62 (4.3)</td>
<td>105 (4.1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CFB</td>
<td>24 (5.3)</td>
<td>0 (6.5)</td>
<td>−11 (5.8)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(P) for change</td>
<td>&lt;0.0001</td>
<td>0.5</td>
<td>0.04</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sleep efficiency (%)</td>
<td>58 (1.3)</td>
<td>74 (1.3)</td>
<td>82 (1.4)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CFB</td>
<td>3 (1.7)</td>
<td>−2 (2.1)</td>
<td>−5 (2.2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(P) for change</td>
<td>0.03</td>
<td>0.1</td>
<td>0.02</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\(P\) for change was <0.0001 for all parameters.

\(a\)Values in parentheses are SEM.

less well. Patients who were least awake at baseline were awakened the most when wearing the ambulatory monitor. WASO in the soundest sleepers was 41 minutes. This increased by 24 minutes \((P < 0.0001)\) when wearing the ambulatory monitor. Sleep efficiency was reduced by 5% in those with the best sleep \((P = 0.02)\).

Figure 1 shows the levels of activity by ABPM. Although the number of minutes in activity levels 1, 2, or 3 were not meaningfully different, there was significant heterogeneity observed among the mean change from baseline in levels of activity \((P = 0.02)\). Specifically, on the day of ABPM patients were more sedentary \(+27\) minutes, \(P = 0.002\).

Figure 2 shows the odds of nondipping when patients were waking after sleep onset when not wearing the ambulatory monitor \textit{versus} when wearing ambulatory monitor. WASO was defined as above median (47 minutes) when ambulatory BP was not being performed. WASO recorded when ABPM was not being performed was not predictive of nondipping \((P = 0.3)\). Upon ABPM, WASO increased to median of 56 minutes. WASO above median during ABPM was associated with nondipping \((\text{odds ratio} 10.48, P = 0.008)\). The additive interaction between WASO at baseline and during ABPM was significant \((\text{odds ratio} 25.4, P = 0.009)\). Thus, when patients were more awake after sleep onset at baseline and this state worsened with ABPM, they experienced greater nondipping.

**Discussion**

Earlier research using polysomnography and continuous noninvasive BP monitoring (using the Finapres device) has demonstrated that ambulatory BP machines cause a rise in simultaneously recorded beat-to-beat systolic and diastolic BP measurements and that the rise is often associated with electroencephalographic arousal from sleep \((6)\). In fact, BP can rise during measurement even in the absence of electroencephalo-
The results of our study may help to generate normative data for ambulatory BP during sleep and activity. If actimetry is performed during days when ABPM is not performed and when it is performed, it may help guide the extent of sleep disturbance attributable to ambulatory monitoring. Normative data can then be generated from among those in whom sleep is not disturbed and then among those in whom sleep is disturbed. These data would have implications for the classification of patients into categories of masked hypertension and white-coat hypertension (11). For example, masked hypertension diagnosed with the criterion standard of nocturnal ambulatory BP was reported to be extremely common among participants in the African-American Study of Kidney Disease (12). Actigraphy when concomitantly performed with ABPM can clarify the nocturnal drop in BP during sleep, especially in conditions associated with nocturnal awakening such as heart failure, sleep apnea, prostatism, and CKD.

Because our study was limited to mostly older veterans who are generally retired, we had fewer younger people who may be physically more active. In the latter individuals, who have better sleep characteristics, ABPM may evoke the most marked disturbance in sleep. Thus the results of our findings may be particularly applicable to individuals who are more active and those who sleep better. Although we excluded patients with morbid obesity, we did not perform polysomnography, therefore we cannot comment on the role of sleep apnea on dipping or lack thereof.

Nondipping BP has numerous causes. Among patients with CKD, who have the highest prevalence of nondipping (13), the causes of nondipping include increased nocturnal physical activity (1), nocturia (14), increased sympathetic activation (15), and sodium sensitivity (16). ABPM-induced sleep disturbance should now be added to the list of causes of nondipping.

Disclosures

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References


